

**The Little Match Girl**  
**As told by Alta Wanlass to her children**  
**By Rhea Wanlass Lewis**

My Mother told us this story from memory every Christmas time. This is how I remember it.....

A long time ago in a far-a-way city, a little girl lived with her poor sick father. It was Christmas time and they didn't have much food to eat or warm clothes to wear. The girl's mother had gone to live in heaven with her grandmother, so it was up to the little girl to go to the city to try and sell a few matches in hope that she could get a few pennies to buy a little food for Christmas for her and her father.

This was in the days when candles, oil lamps and fire places were the only source of light and heat for the homes. She left home with a little crust of bread in her apron pocket and only a little shawl that her grandmother had knitted for her to keep her warm and her box of matches. Her worn-out sandals were of little help against the cold snow and the blowing wind.

As she went on her way she could see children dancing around the Christmas trees through the windows of the large nice homes. She longed for the days when her mother had been with her to sing her to sleep and make goodies for her and her father and grandmother to eat.

As she came to the shops along the way, she looked into the windows at the sweets and meat and fruit that were for sale. If only she could sell enough matches today to buy her father enough bread for a Christmas gift.

The little girl stood on a corner with her matches. No one paid much attention to her because they were in a hurry to buy gifts for their families and hurry home to eat their wonderful dinner with their children. Soon it was snowing and

getting dark at the end of the day. Still she hadn't sold her matches. She thought of her sick father at home and wished she could just be with him and eat a good meal with him.

She soon was so cold that she moved into a corner by a store and sat down with her matches. She saw a falling star in the night sky and thought of a story her grandmother had told her about each time you see a falling star it meant that someone was going to die and go to heaven

As she got colder, she decided to light just one little match to try and get her fingers a little warmer. Oh, it felt so nice and warm that she lit another and then another. Finally she lit all the matches that were left. The small amount of heat felt so good and suddenly she saw her grandmother and she went to heaven with her to be with her and her mother and sing with the angels.

The next day when the people came out of their houses, they found her dead with the burnt-out matches all around her. But she was happy now and away from the hunger and cold and now there is another bright star in the heavens.

Rhea Wanlass Lewis.